

The Children's Page

Our Brief Talk—The Patriot's Psalm

Travellers returning from a visit to Belgium now under the unwelcome rule of the Germans, tell an amusing story of the Belgian boys who evidently refuse to be downhearted.

A number of boys varying in age from fifteen to eighteen years, after pretending to do sentry duty, on the German plan, suddenly marched down in front of the Bourse. Wearing imitation helmets with carrot tops, and armed with broomsticks, they drew up in parade formation.

"Direct to Paris!" their leader cried, and they all did the goose step—backwards—up the hill.

Their fathers and mothers are not so light hearted, for they feel very keenly the loss of their freedom. Yet the whole nation—captive but not subdued—hopes, prays and waits for the time when their own government shall be re-established. It is the assurance of deliverance which helps them to endure patiently the oppression of the Germans.

The Children of Israel suffered the same cruel experience. Not only was their country invaded but the people were driven from their native land into the enemy's country.

An Israelite poet in one of the Psalms tells how the people mourned for their homeland and the enemy mockingly asked them to sing their national hymns. While captivity depressed the spirits of the Israelites, it aroused within them an intense devotion for their own country.

It is a sad experience to leave one's native land, even for a country where the people are good and friendly, but how much more trying it must be to live under the control of cruel strangers, as the Belgians are doing or as in the case of the Israelites to be led away into the enemy's country.

The boys and girls of Canada can serve their King and country as truly as the soldiers and nurses are doing. Good citizens make a country great. The next few years will be a time of preparation for citizenship.

Make a solemn promise to yourselves that you will be worthy citizens—obedient to the laws of the country—servants of the state. Whatever work you undertake, let it be not just done, but exceedingly well done. Unworthy motive or selfish ambition will find no place in the hearts of those who love their country.

The following words by Kipling may help us all to realize the true spirit of service:

"And only the Master shall praise us
And only the Master shall blame,
And no one shall work for money
And no one shall work for fame,
But each for the joy of the working
And each in his separate star
Shall draw the thing as he sees it
For the God of things as they are."

Find the Psalm which tells of the captivity of the Israelites. Copy it (it is not very long) and send to the Editor Children's Page, *Westminster Review*, 1600 Barclay Street, Vancouver, B. C. If more than one correct answer is received, the award will be governed by the neatness of the notes.

(For January prize awards see Editorial page).